Communities of Opportunity

4/21/14 Design Committee Meeting Notes

Attendees:

- King County:
  - Sharon Toquinto, Mental Health, Chemical Abuse, and Dependency Services Division, King County Department of Community and Human Services
  - Sarah Ross-Viles, Prevention Division in Public Health-Seattle & King County
  - Matias Valenzuela, Manager, King County Equity & Social Justice and Manager, Community Engagement & Partnerships, Public Health – Seattle & King County
  - Kirsten Wysen, Program Manager and Living Cities initiative director, Public Health – Seattle & King County
  - Nadine Chan, Assistant Chief, Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit, Public Health-Seattle & King County
  - Laurie Sylla, Systems Performance Evaluation Coordinator, Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division of King County Department of Community and Human Services
- Seattle Foundation:
  - Michael Brown, Vice President, Community Leadership, The Seattle Foundation
  - Jennifer Martin, Director, Community Leadership, The Seattle Foundation
  - Aaron Robertson, Associate, Community Leadership, The Seattle Foundation
  - Judy de Barros, Program Consultant for N2N, The Seattle Foundation
- Additional Organization/Community Representatives:
  - Alice Ito, Center for Community Change (also serves on N2N and the Center for Community Partnerships Advisory Committees)
  - Michael Woo, Got Green (also on the Transformation Plan Advising Partners group)
  - Sili Savusa, White Center CDA
  - Dinah Wilson, City of Kent
  - Hilary Franz, Executive Director, Futurewise
  - Paola Maranan, Children's Alliance (also on the Center advisory committee)
  - Gordon McHenry, Solid Ground (also on the Transformation Plan Advising Partners group)
  - Deanna Dawson, Sound Cities Association (also on the Transformation Plan Advising Partners group)

From flipcharts:

What does <u>authentic</u> community engagement look like?	What energizes you when working on a community project?	Who has influenced you most in your life?
▪ Community leading the work and making decisions ▪ Diversity, including residents of	▪ Seeing the change and watching it change in	▪ My mom ▪ My family ▪ My dad and a professor

neighborhood (and being involved in the beginning) ▪ Both interesting and uncomfortable when it's authentic ▪ Clear paths for community to engage, learn and lead ▪ Residents/community can say "I know this/I own it" ▪ Enough time in the process to get input from lots of perspectives ▪ "Real conversations" ▪ Enough time/value time for process ▪ Including people from multiple sectors, backgrounds with diverse views working together toward a common vision ▪ People in partnership, valuing one another's perspectives ▪ Starting with community voices and interests ▪ Sincere, continuous culturally humble exchanges ▪ Seek out voices from interested silent constituents ▪ People involved with each other, connecting with respect and caring ▪ All voices in the community are represented, heard and work with – all have issues raised, solutions identified and implemented	unexpected ways ▪ People coming together, supporting each other for a common purpose ▪ Creating and renewing relationships ▪ "Seeing old friends" ▪ Creating a pathway for community leadership ▪ New ideas, different perspectives and the synergy of people, ideas and action ▪ <u>Impact</u> potential ▪ Great colleagues ▪ Coming together with others ▪ Witnessing new "ah-ha" moments and new leaders emerge ▪ People excited and working together to make a difference ▪ Working together toward a common purpose ▪ Dynamics where everybody has input and contributions, and success! ▪ Hearing from and engaging those that will own project/experience impact ▪ People coming together, brainstorming strategies, connections made for greater innovative solutions/impact together	▪ My grandpa ▪ My father ▪ Mom ▪ My mom ▪ My family ▪ Best friend ▪ My parents ▪ My dad ▪ My country ▪ My grandmother ▪ My parents ▪ My father and community

Discussion summary:

Draft Guiding Principles for the Communities of Opportunity Initiative
Need to refine and finalize with the group at next meeting
- Authentically engage communities in developing and owning strategies
- Focus on places and neighborhoods with the most to gain
- Prioritize preventative strategies that change the existing systems and policies
- Balance and bridge the local priorities with system and policy changes
- No one group can do this work alone, so we must continually build multi-sector partnerships and have ways to measure and learn together from the work

How we want to work together

- Not make assumptions
- Both/And thinking
- Not be afraid to bring up hard questions and be respectful
- Step up and step back
- Speak candidly and be confidential/mindful of what you share outside the group
- Push each other – don't be afraid to disagree – ask the hard questions
- Be fully present, listen and engage
- Phones off (unless you are waiting for urgent call)

Initiative Framing – Questions and Comments

- Our priorities are health, housing and economic opportunity equity (and how to work across these, integrate them), but health is broadly defined (physical, mental and substance abuse)
- How long will we focus on specific strategies? Will depend on neighborhood needs; could be 2 ½ years or longer.
- Need to clarify our focus – in particular our geographic focus – what about non-geographic communities (ethnic, country of origin, affinity groups, etc.)
- Define further "most to gain" communities under the guiding principles (vs. "biggest needs"). What about "communities that are ready"? How is that defined? Need to think through this not only as needs but also opportunities – what is already underway and in progress?
- We need to focus on institutional racism and power dynamics – start with the institutions already partnering (TSF and King County) – what specific changes/benchmarks will they make in order to improve conditions (not just "out there" in the community)
- Redefine "accountability" – can't just be about being accountable to the funders and their decision-making bodies (that's exactly how things have been done in the past) – what about being accountable to the communities we're serving? How to redefine the work we do together?
- How do we blend our money with funders with different priorities – if we carefully articulate our guiding philosophies and intent, we'll know which funders are a match for the work we're doing
- What's our tolerance for risk?
- How to get <u>authentic community feedback</u> about how this works and whether it's meeting their needs (brainstorm ways to do this – getting lots of perspectives – however, who is "authorized" to speak for the "community"? How much agreement and input do we need to get before making decisions?
- Important to keep in mind that if this was easy, we would have already figured it out – we need to foster and support learning and share those learnings widely
- Let's break out of old patterns – can't do the same things we've done in the past, people are tired of the same discussions
- TRUST and relationships are critical so we can have the hard conversations
- Timelines set up by institutions are unreasonable – we need to understand how the community functions

- This will be hard – only a few neighborhoods will be selected so potentially lots of places will be "left out" – it will be important to think through the communications strategy and how we're also supporting overall work across the county (we are One King County – if one part suffers, we all suffer – targeted investments will benefit all of King County – need to be able to articulate that)
- We need to transform our own institutions

Discussion of "Place" – What do we mean?

- We need to acknowledge that "communities" aren't just geographic – even if we pursue a place-based strategy, how are we honoring the fact that communities are formed not just in place?
- "Community" for immigrants, refugees and other groups means having a support network – so they are a community based on country, ethnicity, affinity, etc. and draw from across the county and region – there is connection based on language, experience and culture – it is the network that helps support them
- Maybe the majority of the money goes in specific places but there is also support for non-geographic communities (an reinforcing overlap)
- There has to be some sort of anchor in the neighborhood that builds relationships across geographic and non-geographic communities
- Relationships often drive where people get support (although someone may move to Tacoma, they will still go back to White Center for services if that's where their relationships are)
- Geographic communities are easily defined and then you can identify community leaders who will own and champion this work – it's ideal to have political and community alignment
- Don't forget about the natural and built environment, education, transit, open space, etc. – there are many elements of "community"
- Different ways to define place - i.e., school districts, zoning areas, neighborhoods, etc. Look at how other efforts underway are defining place (CCER, etc.)
- Strong community organizing/building is critical but always underfunded
- Don't forget about constituent communities – re-entry population, etc.

Neighborhood Selection Criteria and Process

Selection Criteria (potential options)
- Cross-sector partnerships
  - Illustration of cross-sector partnerships
  - Good understanding of how to engage with and enroll institutions
  - Engaged and willing policymakers (city, county, state levels)
  - Aligned with council districts and legislative districts
  - But be careful, don't force partnerships – and they take *time*
- Specific Outcomes
  - Specific outcomes identified that align with our overall priorities

- o Indicators identified
- Places with the greatest disparities/needs
  - o Where the risk/gap is widening; level of risk increased to health, social, racial and economic equity
  - o Largest disparities in outcomes
  - o Greatest system failures
  - o Data points to opportunity and will show outcomes
- Capacity
  - o Readiness (there is community capacity and alignment with the goals of the initiative)
  - o We need to sort through the "need" vs. "opportunity" question – capacity building versus existing networks/capacity (or is there a "Both/And"?)
  - o Community engagement capacity or ability to build capacity
- Community Engagement in Application
  - o Applicant needs to demonstrate community support and "equity of voice"
  - o Communities engaged in process
- Ensure "Sampling"
  - o Diverse sampling of grantees/places that shows regional benefit (geography, scale, need)
  - o At least one "community" chosen should have "the most need"
  - o At least one "community" chosen should be in unincorporated MLK County; include an unincorporated area; consider unincorporated status (e.g., 1 unincorporated, 1 city, 1 Seattle-Area) [Note: these were 3 separate comments on unincorporated areas]
  - o Incorporate "identity communities" within geographic communities
- Local Leadership/Community Organizing Exists
  - o Indigenous leadership
  - o Evidence of credible leadership
  - o Champions; champion organizations with capacity for collaboration and grassroots development [2 comments]
  - o Community organizing ability exists locally
- Sustainability
  - o Long-term sustainability (need to unpack what this means)
  - o Replicability (need to discuss what this means)

Process (potential options)
- Letter of Inquiry with T.A.
  - o Intentional outreach, engagement and co-design with coaching
  - o T.A. important; preparation for application; low barrier
  - o Simple application (oral and/or written) for initial screen
  - o How we can help connect efforts (when multiple groups apply from one area)
- Doing a short-list RFP
  - o Specific communities identified that are eligible to apply for RFP

- o "Light" RFP with site visits, interviews and SHORT documents
- o Need to have transparency around any "short lists" and any selection criteria (i.e., data that led to decisions)
- Other ideas/questions
    - o Grants should be multi-year with annual progress demonstrated
    - o Set realistic goals based on sense of leadership, community's capacity, experience; reasonable accountability measures
    - o Toolbox of best practices for all communities, with subsidies for places in lowest ten percent of census tracts
    - o Can we split the money? Fund the ones that meet criteria and then take risks on others
    - o Need to think through how we decide who is the "right" applicant when there are multiple ones from one geographic area – do we fund multiple efforts? Help try to tie them together?

Next Steps
- **Draft an overview document that maps the potential strategies and timeline for moving forward holistically (including the first RFP, lead up to selecting neighborhoods, etc.)**
- **Set up next design committee meetings for May and July**